

IN THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) ~~An~~ A microelectronic device, comprising:

a semiconductor substrate; and

a nitridized hydroxy-silicate layer.
2. (Original) The microelectronic device of Claim 1, wherein the nitridized hydroxy-silicate layer comprises a silicon oxynitride.
3. (Currently Amended) The microelectronic device of Claim 2, wherein ~~the~~ said silicon oxynitride is a material in accordance with the expression $\text{SiO}_x\text{N}_{(4-2x)/3}$ where $0 \leq x \leq 2$.
4. (Currently Amended) The microelectronic device of Claim ~~2~~ 1, wherein ~~the said silicon oxynitride~~ nitridized hydroxy-silicate layer has a thickness less than approximately 7 angstroms.
5. (Currently Amended) The microelectronic device of Claim ~~2~~ 1, wherein said ~~the~~ semiconductor substrate comprises a silicon wafer.

6. (Currently Amended) The microelectronic device of Claim 4, further comprising a gate electrode disposed over said ~~the silicon oxynitride~~ nitridized hydroxy-silicate layer.
7. The microelectronic device of Claim 6, further comprising a pair of source/drain terminals disposed in the semiconductor substrate, substantially adjacent to ~~the~~ said gate electrode.
8. A field effect transistor, comprising:
 - a gate electrode;
 - a pair of source/drain terminals disposed in a substrate, substantially adjacent ~~the~~ said gate electrode; and
 - a gate dielectric disposed between the gate electrode and the substrate, the gate dielectric comprising a ~~silicon oxynitride~~ nitridized hydroxy-silicate layer less than or equal to approximately 7 angstroms.
9. (Cancelled)
10. (Cancelled)
11. (Cancelled)
12. (Cancelled)

13. (Cancelled)

14. (Cancelled)

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19. (Cancelled)

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21. (Cancelled)

22. (Cancelled)

23. (Cancelled)

24. (Cancelled)

25. (Cancelled)

26. (Cancelled)